



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 1, 2009

Re: DCPS Five-Year Action Plan community feedback and revisions

Background

In October 2008, District of Columbia Public Schools released *Making Student Achievement the Focus: A five-year action plan for District of Columbia Public Schools*. This document was created to define and sequence the major steps DCPS will take over the next five years to achieve the goals outlined in the Master Education Plan of 2006. The Five-Year Action Plan (FYAP) is intended to serve as a “living document;” it will be revisited and revised regularly as DCPS learns what works and what changes need to be made.

Following the initial release of the FYAP, DCPS collected feedback from stakeholders through a series of forums, including the November 2008 Council hearing, the three Chancellor’s Community Forums devoted to the FYAP in October and November 2008, and a dedicated email address for written feedback. In response to this feedback, DCPS revised and re-released the FYAP in April 2009.

Purpose

This memo summarizes the feedback DCPS collected on the FYAP, and the revisions DCPS made to the FYAP in response to this feedback.

Methodology

Feedback was first organized into two categories: *general feedback* and *programmatic feedback*.

- *General feedback* called for revision or addition of language around issues not related to a specific educational issue or program (ex. collaboration with other District agencies).
- *Programmatic feedback* called either for provision of further information around DCPS plans in particular educational programming areas (ex. Early Childhood Education, or English Language Learners), or for specific policy decisions in those areas.

Programmatic feedback was then categorized by educational issue area. Several educational issues emerged as areas of frequent feedback, with multiple stakeholders voicing similar or related concerns on these issues.

DCPS's revisions to the FYAP focused on addressing the feedback offered in these frequently raised issue areas.

Summary of Feedback and Revisions

This section summarizes the broad areas of feedback that were addressed in this revision of the FYAP. The subsequent section outlines this feedback at a more detailed level, as well as the specific language added or revised to address it.

General feedback

- Reconsider tone, which is at times too negative
- Identify criteria for measuring success
- Provide more clarity on the relationship of the plan to:
 - Other agencies (how will you collaborate?)
 - Other strategic documents
 - Classroom practice

Programmatic feedback

- Provide more information on plans for:
 - Early childhood education
 - Career-technical education
 - Truancy and dropout prevention
 - School safety
 - Resource distribution and equity
 - English-Language Learners
 - Teacher evaluation and compensation
 - Professional development
 - Afterschool programming
 - Parent engagement

Detail of Feedback and Revisions

This section outlines stakeholder feedback, and DCPS's response, at a more detailed level. Feedback and revisions are organized in the following manner:

1. **Table 1** outlines feedback in frequently raised issue areas, and the revisions made to address this feedback. Feedback and revisions are organized by issue area. All feedback is paraphrased and sometimes represents a composite of two or more people's comments.
2. **Table 2** outlines feedback that was: already addressed in the October 2008 draft, addressed in a related document, too specific to be addressed in the FYAP, or

was beyond the scope of this plan. All feedback is paraphrased and sometimes represents a composite of two or more people's comments.

Table 1

Issue area	Feedback (paraphrased)	Group	Revisions to plan
General feedback	The introduction is too gloomy.	CM Wells	Language revised to recognize positives. See: p. 3, 9, 29, 41, 52, 61, 69
	Reading that DCPS is “broken” is demoralizing to teachers	Cmty members	
	Provide more detail on plans for strategic collaboration w/ other DC agencies	Cmty members	Language added and maintained. See: p. 18, 19, 22, 23, 57, 72
	Provide more detail on the plan’s relationship w/ other key documents (ex. MEP, MFP)	Council Chair, CM Schwartz	Language added, p. 3: This plan does not replace the Master Education Plan (MEP) developed by the previous administration of DCPS. It rather seeks to refine, define, and sequence the steps we are taking to achieve the lofty goals of the MEP—goals in which we strongly believe. The Five-Year Action Plan will also guide the development of several other key plans related to student achievement in the District of Columbia. The annual DCPS Performance Plan draws from this action plan in defining the yearly goals to which the mayor will hold DCPS accountable. Each year, we will return to the overall goals and initiatives laid out in this Action Plan, assess our current status, and define the specific objectives we will focus on for the coming year. In addition, the Master Facilities Plan, whose goal is to modernize all DCPS classrooms within the next five years, mirrors the timeline and ambition of this plan. The Master Facilities Plan has been shaped by the educational priorities of DCPS, outlined in further detail below.
	How does the plan relate to schools, teachers, classroom practice, and teaching and learning? What is the relevance to teachers’ everyday work?	Cmty members	Language added (ex. Effective Schools Framework, Teaching and Learning Framework), p. 41, 42, 49
Early Childhood Education	The plan doesn’t address Early Childhood Education / The plan should include more information about pre-kindergarten	Council Chair, cmty members	Language added, p. 16: Expand access to early childhood programs for three- and four-year-olds, while building and maintaining program quality across all early childhood programs. <i>We will:</i>
	There is not enough being done early on to instill the basic values of what it means to be a good student	Cmty member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to increase the number of seats in DCPS pre-school and pre-kindergarten programs. We will assess current program enrollment, determine areas of potential for greatest growth, and identify high quality programs for expansion. In school year 2009-10, we will open between 80 and 270 new seats in high-demand pre-school and pre-kindergarten programs across the city. • Link all early childhood programs to DCPS early learning standards. • Establish a consistent, developmentally appropriate system for measuring child progress and identifying early signs of learning disability. • Create and implement an annual comprehensive assessment of current programs to determine program quality, identify areas for improvement, and select high

Issue area	Feedback (paraphrased)	Group	Revisions to plan
			<p>quality programs for expansion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement intervention strategies in areas identified for improvement. • Increase the number of specialized programs (ex. Reggio Emilia, Montessori). • Develop demonstration centers at select model programs as a resource for teacher training, parent education, comprehensive services, and research. • Hire on-site coaches for job-embedded teacher training in early childhood education, with a projected total of one for every five schools.
Career-Technical Education (CTE)	The plan doesn't address Career-Technical Education	CMs, cmtly members	<p>Language added, p. 43-44:</p> <p>Realign our career and technical program offerings to meet student demand for career development opportunities as well as to ensure academic rigor. DCPS understands the importance of career development as a means to improve student achievement and prepare students for the rigor and demands of post-secondary opportunities. A new, comprehensive and holistic Career Pathways Program will be developed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align DCPS career and technical offerings to the D.C. Workforce Development plan and local labor market trends. • Align curricula within each field around industry-approved skill standards and core academic standards, to ensure that students leave prepared for both workforce and postsecondary success. • Ensure that Career Pathways coursework leads to national, industry-approved certification or licensure. • Work with college and university partners to provide Career Pathways students with articulation certifications that guarantee college credit for Career Pathways coursework. • Increase student enrollment and parent involvement in Career Pathways programming by conducting outreach through a system-wide career day, middle school career fairs, monthly high school Career Academy open houses, and industry partner-sponsored parent workshops. • Provide career and technical education offerings at a wide range of high schools, including both comprehensive high schools and citywide selective high schools. • Establish a parent advisory board to solicit feedback on Career Pathways strategic
	Every school should have CTE options / The school day should be enlarged so all students can take vocational classes		
	CTE programs like the ones at Phelps should not be exclusive (e.g. admission by exam)		

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			planning and to draft a Parent Handbook on Career Pathways offerings.
Truancy, dropout prevention, and college readiness	How will you hold parents accountable for getting students to schools? / How does our truancy policy fit into the FYAP?	CM Catania, CM Barry	<p>Language added, p. 20-22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the rate of attendance reporting at each school to 100% each day and ensure that effective attendance policies are enforced district-wide, with the objective of raising the average rate of student attendance to 95% of school days and reducing the truancy rate across the district. <p>...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish attendance committees at each school. Attendance committees will be composed of counselors, social workers, teachers, and any other school staff needed to identify and coordinate intervention plans for students who have accumulated 10 or more unexcused absences. <p>...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Office of the City Administrator and the Deputy Mayor for Education to gather data on current truancy processes, identify trends and best practices, and draw conclusions about ideal school and district staffing models for truancy prevention. We will also work with Child and Family Services (CFSA) and Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to ensure that truancy is reported and that students referred to court receive the appropriate support.
	The plan doesn't explicitly mention improving dropout rates and graduation / Where are we in terms of our graduation rate, and what are we doing to move forward?	Cmty members	<p>Language added</p> <p>p. 41:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established online accounts for all high school students where they can develop Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs). By aligning their past academic work with DCPS requirements, specific post-secondary requirements, and their own career and academic interests, IGPs will increase students' ability to achieve their goals.
	There should be more emphasis on key transition points where dropouts occur	Cmty member	<p>p. 44:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs) for all high school students, one component of which is an Individual Courses Plan (ICP), where students in 8th grade map their full high school pathway to graduation. ICPs are to be updated twice yearly to account for any changes and ensure adjustment to future schedules. <p>p. 52:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaned data in STARS to ensure all high school juniors and seniors are correctly

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			classified based on graduation requirements, and if not that they are quickly signed up for the appropriate classes to get them back on track.
	What kinds of alternative programs do we have for students?	Cmty member	Language added, p. 9: Opened the Youth Engagement Academy (YEA) and Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering High School - both citywide programs which will ultimately serve 9 th -12 th grade students. YEA serves students who are not succeeding in traditional school environments and would benefit from a small, alternative high school setting with added supports.
	Curricular options should be matched to student interests to increase attendance and reduce dropouts	Cmty member	Language revised, p. 13-14: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High schools. With all of our comprehensive high schools in PI-5 status, we will consider reconstitution and conversion frequently, though on a staged basis. In concert, we will make a series of aggressive improvements at our high schools. We will offer intensive academic supports to students (e.g., ninth grade academies, Saturday schools, summer bridge, in-school tutoring). At the other end of the spectrum, students will have the opportunity to take on the challenge of AP courses, while recognizing that depending on their preparation, such courses may require more than a year to successfully complete. A full range of extracurricular programs will be offered at every high school to capture developing student interests. Finally, we will explicitly build a college going culture in all of our high schools so that all students can see a clear path to post-secondary education. Individual graduation plans and advisory programs will form the foundation for all students to build towards strong post-secondary options.
	There should be more high-quality programs at the high school level. What will be done for high schools and high school students?	Cmty member	
	There isn't enough push for higher education. DCPS should promote college.	Cmty member	
School environment, safety, and discipline	What is DCPS doing to make our schools safe? / What is DCPS doing to improve school security?	CM Barry, cmty members	Language revised, p. 19-23: At the district level, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the municipal regulations that establish processes for responding to serious student behavior issues, with an eye to increasing support for students (Chapter 25). We will also outline conditions that must be in place at every school to ensure a safe and orderly environment. Review all new suspensions in the Office of Youth Engagement or the Instructional Superintendent's office and ensure that all suspension data is documented in STARS, with the aim to reduce the rate of suspension at each school. At the school level, every building will develop a shared statement of rules and expectations tailored to meet those conditions set at the district level. Principals will be asked to:
	What are you going to do about student discipline beyond punitive measures?		
	Every school should have a behavioral plan in place.		
	How does the plan address creating a more positive environment for teachers?		
	How will you provide incentives to students for behaving well, rather than simply punishing them when they behave poorly?		

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve students, teachers, and parents in drafting this statement, to meet the challenges particular to his or her school. • Re-examine and update these rules and expectations at the beginning of each school year, again with a committee of students, teachers, and parents. <p>Teachers will have flexibility to add rules for student behavior in their own classrooms as they see fit, given prior approval from principals and given that they reflect the school-wide expectations.</p> <p>Create structures and supports to help teachers and students meet those rules and expectations.</p> <p>For students, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new adult advisory relationships. We will group all students into advisory cohorts at the secondary level, assigning each cohort to a school staff member. These adult advisors will act as mentors to students, checking in with them frequently on academic issues (e.g., their test preparation and scores, their post-high school plans) and personal issues. • Bolster Student Support Teams (SSTs) to coordinate academic and/or behavioral interventions for at-risk students (e.g., students who are academically not on grade level, chronically absent or truant, or at-risk for grade-level retention). SSTs are school-based committees that include administrators, general educators, counselors, parents, and other staff. Interventions will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Documented services for students returning from suspension, to facilitate a smooth transition back into the school community. – Peer mediation programs to facilitate peer-led prevention and intervention. • Provide incentives for students to meet high standards for behavior, attendance, and academic performance. The Capital Gains initiative is an innovative new program run in partnership with Harvard University's Education Innovation Laboratory to offer short-term financial incentives to encourage students to do what is in their long term interest: study hard and increase achievement. During its pilot year in 2008-2009, teachers and school staff in 15 schools are monitoring students in five different areas related to student achievement, including attendance, behavior and academic performance. Students earn points for their performance on each of their school's five chosen indicators. When too many DCPS students are not getting the preparation they need during middle school, Capital Gains will be able to target middle school students with rewards that we

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			<p>expect will keep students more engaged and driven towards achievement in these critical years. If the program shows the benefits we expect, we will consider continuing beyond the two-year research pilot and expanding it to include other schools.</p> <p>For teachers, we will begin professional development programs aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing effective instruction to keep students focused on and engaged in learning. • Enforcing behavioral expectations for students that both model and require respectful interactions between all members of the school community. • Increasing effective personal interaction with students (e.g., how to “speak to kids,” how to calm tense situations). <p>For all teachers and principals, we will continue working to ensure that they have effective systems and structures in place to promote positive student behavior and respond to misbehavior.</p> <p>Ensure schools can act quickly and effectively when rules and expectations are broken. We will act on two fronts to ensure this happens: we will enable teachers and administrators to respond more uniformly to disciplinary infractions, and we will improve the physical security of our schools.</p> <p>For teachers and administrators, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise Chapter 25 of Title V of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, which governs student discipline at DCPS. In doing so, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create a list of all student infractions, ordered from the most severe to the most minor, with specific corresponding consequences for each. We will devote specific attention to specifying why and for how long students may be suspended. – Hold training sessions to ensure that teachers and principals are using the policies consistently. <p>From a physical security standpoint, we will work with the Office of School Security to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance security technology within schools. We will do this by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Replacing aging metal detectors and x-ray machines. – Adding additional security cameras to schools. – Creating new monitoring centers at secondary schools. Currently,

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			<p>only a small handful of staff in DCPS's central office is responsible for monitoring the 3,500 surveillance cameras throughout the school system. Though principals have access to the video monitoring system, school surveillance is not their most pressing responsibility. By creating monitoring centers in particularly challenging schools, DCPS will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improve identification of and response time to security incidents. – Potentially reduce security incidents, as students become aware of the speedier identification of fights and violence and the enactment of consequences. – Potentially reduce the number of security staff in schools, since monitoring centers will create a more efficient dispatch system for responding to disciplinary incidents. – Hire experienced law-enforcement personnel to provide security to schools. These personnel will not be limited to current MPD officers or School Resource Officers (SROs). We will also recruit retired officials from various law-enforcement agencies across DC. – Determine the correct number of law-enforcement officials to hire based on the success of our school-to-school monitoring and dispatch systems. – Create closer coordination between the Office of Security and OPEFM, to ensure that new construction and renovations to old buildings are aligned with security interests (e.g., ensure that all windows in new schools are operable).
Resources	What will be done to ensure schools get the resources they need?	Cmtly members	Language added, p. 17-18:
	How will you ensure that resources are equitably distributed?	Cmtly members	<p>Institute a Comprehensive Staffing Model (CSM) to ensure that all schools have the core resources necessary for success. CSM is a budgeting and resource allocation framework that represents the most equitable way to allocate resources across the district, ensuring all schools have a team of practitioners to provide what we have defined as a standard set of school offerings and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Support (i.e. Principal, Business Manager, Registrar) • Enrichment (i.e. Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education) • Academic Support (i.e. Guidance Counselors, Professional Developers, Media Center Specialist) • Wellness Support (i.e. Social Worker, Psychologist, Nurse) <p>Many schools lacked these basic resources prior to the implementation of CSM in the</p>
	How does the Comprehensive Staffing Model work?	Cmtly member	
	Every school should receive wrap-around services (counselor, social worker, etc.)	Cmtly member	

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			2008-09 school year. Over the next five years, CSM – which was implemented fairly rigidly in its first year – will be evaluated and modified with feedback from key stakeholders. In the 2009-2010 school year, for example, CSM will be updated to incorporate community feedback seeking greater flexibility. While it will retain its fundamental principle of allocating a core set of positions to all schools, CSM will begin to include enrollment-based “flexible funds” to staff and resource the remainder of the school program. This will allow principals to tailor the academic program to the specific needs of each school community.
English-Language Learners	The plan doesn’t address English-Language Learners	Cmty members	Language added, p. 26-27: English Language Learners
	Language access for parents with limited English proficiency must be improved.	Cmty members	<p>Fifteen percent of students in DCPS come from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, and 9 percent (over 4,000 students) are English Language Learners (ELLs). There is a persistent gap in achievement between our ELLs and their English language-proficient peers, particularly in the area of reading comprehension and at the high school level.</p> <p>Our ELL-focused reforms, like our special education reforms, will be guided by the principles of inclusion and of an excellent education for all students. Over the next five years, the Office of Bilingual Education (OBE) will take the following steps to improve service to and raise achievement across our ELL population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance training for all teachers in working with diverse populations. We must significantly increase the capacity of our general education teachers to serve ELLs effectively. We are currently reviewing instructional delivery for ELLs in underperforming schools in an effort to re-engineer teaching and learning around research-based strategies proven to raise ELL achievement. Moreover, in addition to the on-going professional development provided by OBE on nationally recognized, English-language proficiency instruction, as well as the graduate courses on ELL instruction offered in partnership with Catholic University, we will launch professional development in key areas including second language acquisition, differentiated instruction, cultural competency, and multicultural education. • Establish increased accountability for effective ELL instruction. We will work in concert with the Office of the Deputy Chancellor for Human Capital to ensure that teacher observation rubrics include appropriate measures of ELL instruction. We will also collaborate with the Office of the State Superintendent’s Credentialing Office as it works to rewrite D.C. teacher certification requirements. This work will ensure that teachers who serve ELL students have the tools to be effective.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align Dual Language programs around core elements of effective Dual Language instruction. We will evaluate all Dual Language programs operating in DCPS on core elements of their program implementation and issue recommendations with the aim of increasing standardization of Dual Language programs around effective practices. Create a one-stop intake center with comprehensive services for linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) students. DCPS enrolls students from 135 countries who speak over 120 different languages; each year, our Intake and Assessment Center screens 1200 LCD students to determine their instructional needs, facilitate their placement into the most appropriate educational programs, and provide orientation to the DCPS system. In order to better facilitate the enrollment of eligible LCD students in DCPS, we will expand the Intake Center to provide a comprehensive set of placement services, including D.C. residency verification, immunization documentation review, and vaccination. Increase parent engagement among LCD families in DCPS. In addition to ensuring language access to vital information for LCD families in compliance with the D.C. Language Access Law, the Office of Bilingual Education will coordinate with Parent Resource Centers in wards with large LCD populations to ensure that they meet the needs of our LCD parents. We will also work with principals to facilitate the inclusion of LCD parents in school-based activities and decision-making groups such as Local School Restructuring Teams (LSRTs).
Teacher evaluation and compensation	What does the teacher evaluation process linked to student achievement look like?	Cmty members	Language added, p. 34-35: We plan to simplify and redesign teacher evaluations around six core components:
	How will teachers be evaluated in addition to test scores? / I don't think tests should be the only standard for hiring and retention.	Cmty members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth in Student Achievement at the Individual Teacher Level: The core responsibility of an educator is to ensure that his or her students grow academically. A value-added model is being developed to provide growth estimates using the DC-CAS for English and math teachers in grades 4-8 (approximately 18% of the teaching force) starting in 2009-2010. Growth measurement will ultimately be expanded across the teaching force, with an immediate priority on grades K-3 and secondary math, science, social studies, and English. Proficiency in Job-Related Performance Standards: Administrators and impartial subject-area experts will assess teachers on research-based performance standards during a series of classroom observations to occur over the course of each school year. Because an evaluation system must not just determine compensation but also drive professional growth, teachers with low proficiency ratings will receive Individual Growth Plans outlining targeted, individualized

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			<p>support to be provided by an impartial subject-area expert in areas of professional need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of Special Education: In order to promote a culture of accountability among all teachers for meeting the needs of our special education students, we will assess both special education and general education teachers on fulfillment of special education responsibilities, such as attendance at IEP meetings. • Professionalism: In the current evaluation system, a teacher may earn a zero on professionalism and still receive an Exceeds Expectations rating. We will make professionalism a meaningful part of the evaluation system, measuring fulfillment of such responsibilities as timeliness in reporting to duty, compliance with policies and procedures, and respectfulness in interactions with other members of school community. • School-Level Goals: Each school will choose three school-level goals from a menu to be developed by the Office of Data and Accountability, including items such as increased proficiency levels, increased attendance rate, decreased suspension rate, decreased rate of teacher absenteeism, or increased graduation rate. The school's rate of success at reaching these goals will be reflected on each educator's evaluation, in an effort to foster a collective sense of accountability for the school's success. • Content Knowledge (for pilot purposes only in SY 2009-2010): This component will be designed to measure the extent to which educators have the requisite knowledge to fulfill their instructional responsibilities.
Professional development	How are subject-area PD coaches preferable to specialists (ex. reading teachers)?	Cmty members	Language added, p. 32:
	What will the role of professional development coaches be?	Cmty members	Research clearly indicates that teachers who practice new skills while on the job and who receive frequent feedback from non-evaluative figures demonstrate greater mastery of those skills, as well as higher rates of retention. In the 2008-2009 school year, we initiated substantial investments in building a team of school-based coaches who play a number of roles throughout the school – professional developer, mentor, facilitator, resource provider, program manager, content specialist, data support specialist, and catalyst for change.
	Teachers should have more opportunities to interact directly with the Chancellor	CM Bowser	Language added, p. 38: We will also explore the possibility of creating a Teacher-Central Office Administration Fellows program, rotating teachers on summer break into central office capacities.
	The plan should provide for improved lines of communication between teachers,	Cmty members	Language added, p. 50:

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	administrators, and students about district goals		<p>Develop a comprehensive DCPS Educator Performance Management Platform that serves the following core functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate communication between administrators and teachers, and between teachers themselves, about professional practice.
Afterschool programming	How will you get students to take advantage of afterschool programming?	Cmty member	<p>Language added, p. 45:</p> <p>Align afterschool program offerings with students' instructional and developmental needs. Afterschool programming offers students critical opportunities not only to receive enrichment through arts, culture, health, and wellness activities, but also to receive academic assistance, extend the school day, and complete courses they need to be on-track for promotion or graduation. For this reason, all afterschool programs at DCPS will be integrated into a single comprehensive initiative, with dedicated full-time coordinators, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that afterschool providers fulfill specific minimum requirements and have been appropriately matched to the needs of students and schools. Ensure that afterschool providers understand and are held to rigorous standards of practice, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriate tracking of attendance; adherence to the program design outlined in their applications to provide service at DCPS; regular solicitation of student and parent feedback, and revision of program design in response to student and parent feedback; and maintenance of program quality, as demonstrated through regular on-site evaluations and annual reporting requirements. Support afterschool providers in meeting the standards of practice by providing them with technical assistance and/or direction to the appropriate resources. Establish an "Academic Power Hour" at the elementary and middle school levels to provide students with academic assistance in areas of need, as indicated by achievement data, as well as enrichment through arts, culture, health and wellness activities. Expand afterschool programs at all high schools to include academic, enrichment and wellness activities. Expand afternoon credit recovery programs to all high schools, offering students
	Partnerships with out of school time providers should be included in the plan.	Cmty member	
	Do we use after-school coordinators to provide information to parents? How are we monitoring the job that they are doing?	Cmty member	

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			<p>the opportunity to extend their school day and complete the courses they need to be on-track for promotion or graduation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer online, for-credit courses to high school students with guidance from a trained staff. • Track attendance of all students enrolled in afterschool programs through DC-STARs (including school-sponsored clubs, sports, credit recovery courses, tutorials, etc.).
Parent engagement	Schools are not welcoming environments for parents. Front office staff are not helpful. Schools need guidance on best practices for attracting parents to the school.	Cmty members	<p>Language added, p. 70-71:</p> <p>In addition, DCPS recognizes that its schools must be transformed into welcoming environments that encourage the full and active participation of parents. To this end, DCPS will establish a high degree of accountability for teachers and principals to establish and maintain sound practices for parent communication and involvement. The Effective Schools Framework and the Teaching and Learning Framework are blueprints for excellent schools and excellent instruction in every DCPS school; meaningful involvement with parents and community is an essential element in both of these frameworks. Performance metrics for teachers and principals will include effective parent communication methods and satisfaction levels.</p>
	How will you engage parents who are reluctant to become involved, due to negative past experiences with the schools?	Cmty member	

Table 2

Category	Feedback (paraphrased)	Notes
Already addressed in plan	What is the Twilight Program?	See p. 21
	Are there specific initiatives to address adolescents?	See p. 13 (middle school transitions), p. 21 (Capital Gains), p. 25 (Full-Service Schools)
	How does the plan address Special Education?	See p. 23-26
	How will you prepare general ed teachers for the mainstreaming/inclusion of Special Ed students?	See p. 32-33
	What are the implications of NCLB restructuring? How will schools in restructuring be supported? How will the community be engaged in restructuring?	See p. 12-15
	Don't forget to recognize the work of volunteers.	See p. 75
	How do school-based parent groups, church groups, and other	See p. 72-75

	partnerships fit into the plan?	
	There should be a central point of contact for community based organizations.	See p. 75
	DCPS should use structures already in place to more effectively distribute information (ex. ANCs)	See p. 72
	Parents without internet access should be able to access information in other ways / It's hard to find information on the website.	See p. 71 (PRCs), 72 (parent coordinators)
	There should be parent handbooks on topics like academic expectations, school security, and special education.	See p. 44 (Academic Course Guide, Career Pathways hndbook)
	There must be coherent, aligned professional development in order to achieve the plan's goals. Have there been any changes in terms of what kinds of PD opportunities are available to teachers?	See p. 31-33
	The plan should focus on helping teachers improve, not simply terminating them.	
	There should be mentoring programs for teachers.	See p. 32-33, 37, 57
	What are the rewards and consequences for high or low performance?	See p. 35
	There should be a greater focus on developing homegrown teachers.	See p. 33, 35-36
	What are your plans to improve data collection?	See p. 47, 52, 55-56
	What are you doing to operationalize student, teacher, and school performance data more frequently than just every grading period?	See p. 48, 50
	How is food service different this year?	See p. 61-62, 65
	What is the plan for closing the achievement gap?	One of 2 overarching goals for the entire 5yrPlan
	The community should be involved in principal recruitment and selection.	Already true
	DCPS should not use scripted curricula.	Already true
	There should be regular meetings between central office and teachers.	Incorporated into Chancellor's teacher sessions
Addressed in related documents	What does a compelling school look like on the day-to-day level?	See Effective Schools Framework
	What does a supportive and performance-driven culture for teachers look like?	See Effective Schools Framework
	How is a rigorous curriculum developed?	See Effective Schools Framework
	Educators should be trained to better inform parents about the questions they should be asking, and to be more receptive to what parents say. Parents want to be involved but are unsure what to do.	See Effective Schools Framework
	What are the criteria by which to measure whether this plan is working?/ Provide criteria for measuring DCPS implementation of the plan and who is responsible for each initiative	See FY 09 Performance Plan
Too specific for this document	The plan should be grade-level friendly.	
	There should be more emphasis on kindergarten and first grade.	
	There should be a military-style public academy for students with behavioral problems, in partnership with DC police.	
	There should be Career Centers.	

	DCPS should incorporate the community school model into the plan.	
	DCPS should be able to retain students at all grade levels, rather than wait until 3 rd grade.	
	Regarding the integration of Special Ed students back into DCPS, there should be “transition centers,” or qualified Special Ed teachers in the classrooms where they’re placed.	
	There is confusion about the Full-Service Model of special education.	
	How much impact will special education reforms have on DCPS spending in 3 to 5 years?	
	What is the master plan for school technology?	
	There should be a partnership with UDC, to create a college-going mindset.	
	We have a shortage of aides. What if we had high school students fulfill volunteer hours by serving as teachers’ aides?	
	Teachers should get diversity training.	
	The curriculum is better aligned to the test than before, but still needs improvement.	
	Students in today’s society need to learn cultural literacy, planetary awareness, and social justice.	
	The plan should provide for language programs in all schools.	Plan already addressed priority in middle grades, and through Catalyst schools
	Does DCPS have any plans to make student grades, transcripts, and school achievement data more accessible to CBOs?	
	Student governments should be part of the plan.	
	Who will advocate for students if parents won’t engage?	
	Add more health and PE requirements.	State issue
	How does DCPS decide what specialized programs to use? How are program placements decided upon?	
	What are you doing to ensure that the people teaching credit recovery courses are highly qualified?	
Beyond the scope of this plan (requires philosophical discussion or extensive discussion of the research)	A five-year plan is not useful because you lose children in the interim.	While we must move with a sense of urgency to meet the needs of students in the here and now, we must also recognize that not all change can happen overnight, so we must map out where we are headed.
	DCPS should reconsider the K-8 model, in favor of more program-driven models.	K-8 does not conflict with program-driven models.
	What data is there to show that offering PE, Art, and Music in all schools is effective?	There is a body of research that links arts education with success in core academic subjects. As important, we believe that all of our students deserve exposure to a broad curriculum that includes the arts. Physical education is a central part of developing strong bodies and healthy life-long habits.
	What data is there to show that Twilight Programs are effective in DC?	We look forward to reviewing the data of our initial Twilight pilot.
	Sometimes we need to separate the students who want to learn from	In-school suspension, as well as the CHOICE program are approaches to addressing

	those who are misbehaving, to help them advance.	this issue.
	DCPS should consider placing a professional developer in each subject area at each school.	
	Teachers are given too much to do.	
	DCPS should avoid focusing on reading and math to the exclusion of other subjects.	Agreed.
	DCPS should avoid teaching to the test.	Teachers should not be solely focused on the DC-CAS, as it is only one limited measure of what students should know and be able to do. At the same time, DC has worked hard to create a test that is rigorous and aligned with standards, so “teaching to the test” becomes one way of teaching to the standards.
	How are policies created?	
	DCPS should use grassroots community organizing strategies to engage parents / build support for these goals. DCPS should work with the union because they have ideas on how to do this.	
	We should focus on holding parents responsible, not teachers.	We believe that, while parents clearly play a central role in the success of students, as a school system we should be focusing our efforts on things directly in our control – i.e., what happens during the school day between school staff and students.
	Sometimes parent involvement can be disruptive.	Perhaps, but we believe that too much parent involvement is better than too little.
	Not enough parents use the Parent Resource Centers.	Agreed. We are working to extend the reach of the PRCs
	Class sizes should be reduced. / Why doesn't the money for the teacher contract go to reducing class sizes?	Class sizes in DCPS are generally quite reasonable, as compared to standards across the country. In addition, research has demonstrated that – beyond the early childhood grades – the impact of smaller class size on student achievement is insignificant, while being very costly.